

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8951

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1723

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, UY

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL-MILITARY CONFRONTATION

REFS: A) MVD 1706; B) MVD 1711 AND PREVIOUS

1. TENSION OF AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF MAY 22 HAS ABATED TEMPORARILY. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH MILITARY AT BOISO LANZA (REFTEL A), PRESIDENT BORDABERRY RETURNED TO HIS OFFICE AND HELD HIS REGULAR THURSDAY EVENING DECREE SIGNING SESSION WITH MINISTERS. HOWEVER, JUNTA DE GENERALES MEETING CONTINUED FOR SEVERAL HOURS MORE.

2. WE GETTING REPORTS WHICH CONFLICT WITH OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK PRESENTED BY SOURCE CITED IN REFTEL B. BORDABERRY RESPONDED MAY 22 TO MEMORANDUM PRESENTED TO HIM BY THE MILITARY EVENING MAY 20 BUT THERE IS NO OTHER CLEAR INDICATION THAT ANY COMPROMISE WAS REACHED. WE BELIEVE THAT MILITARY TOOK HARD LINE MAY 20, INSISTING AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT PEILE BE REINSTATED AND THAT BORDABERRY CLARIFY HIS POSITION WITH RESPECT TO 1976 ELECTIONS. BORDABERRY WENT BACK TO MILITARY MAY 22 (REFTEL A) WITH A SIMILARLY FIRM POSTURE REJECTING MANY MILITARY DEMANDS AND ACCUSATIONS. WHILE THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE PRESIDENT HANDLED HIMSELF WELL AND WAS IMPRESSIVE, THE FACT REMAINS THAT AFTER HE DEPARTED THE GENERALS HAD BEEN GIVEN A REPLY WHICH PROVIDED NEI-

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THER A SOLUTION NOR A WAY OUT.

3. WHILE THE NATION THIS AFTERNOON PAUSES TO REPATRIATE COL. LATORRE'S REMAINS A COMMITTEE OF GENERAL AND FLAG OFFICERS IS WORKING ON RECOMMENDATION TO BE PRESENTED TO THEIR PEERS AND THEN TO THE PRESIDENT. THE COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE (GENERALS EDUARDO ZUBIA AND GROPP, RADM MARQUEZ AND BRIGADIER CARDOZO) IS ENCOURAGING IN THE ZUBIA AND CARDIZO, AT LEAST, ARE MODERATES. THE FACT THAT THEY ARE MEETING IS ALSO ENCOURAGING.

4. WHILE THE TWO CONTENDERS ARE STILL FAR APART, THEY CONTINUE TO NEGOTIATE AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE EITHER DESIRES A SHOWDOWN NOW. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THE MILITARY, ON THE ONE HAND, DOES NOT WANT TO FORCE BORDABERRY OUT AND THAT HE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD DECIDED NOT TO RESIGN BUT TO FORCE THEM TO REMOVE HIM IF THEY WANT HIM OUT. HOWEVER, BORDABERRY IS STANDING ON PRINCIPLE AND NOT ONLY THE SUBSTANCE BUT ALSO THE TONE OF THE MILITARY'S NEXT APPROACH TO HIM WILL WEIGH HEAVILY ON HIS REACTION.

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE CABINET WE BELIEVE SOME MINISTERIAL CHANGES ARE PROBABLE. EACH BATCH OF RUMORS INCLUDES A DIFFERENT GROUP OF MINISTERS SLATED TO LEAVE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO REPORT AS SITUATION DEVELOPS.
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